



What happened to our dirt?

- Studies show that some dirt in King County is contaminated with chemicals. Dirt is contaminated when toxic substances get into the ground and mix with the soil.
- The pollution comes from factories, gasoline with lead, old lead paint, and pesticides.
- Chemicals such as arsenic and lead in dirt also came from air pollution caused by the ASARCO copper smelter.
- The smelter, near Tacoma, is now closed, but it operated for 100 years. Pollution from the smokestack contaminated some of the ground all over Puget Sound.



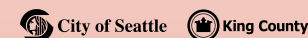
For more information on arsenic and lead in dirt call the Tacoma Smelter Plume Project at Public Health - Seattle & King County at 206-205-4394. You can also visit: www.metrokc.gov/health/tsp/arseniclead.htm



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Available in alternate formats.
Call 206-205-4394



Why be alert in the dirt?

Playing outside is fun and healthy. However, the dirt in yards, playgrounds and other outdoor areas may be polluted. Chemicals such as arsenic and lead in dirt came from air pollution caused by the ASARCO copper smelter. Lead and arsenic may cause health problems for adults and children, such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and skin color changes. Children are also at risk for learning disabilities, decreased growth, and hyperactivity. So be alert in the dirt.

Why is polluted dirt so unsafe for young children?

- Children are not just little adults. A child's brain and body is still growing and developing.
- Kids are extra-sensitive to chemicals and their small bodies can't get rid of poisons as quickly as adults.
- Children often play outside on the ground or inside on the floor.
- They explore their world by putting everything in their mouths. So they get more dirt in their bodies.



What can I do to stay healthy in dirt contaminated by the ASARCO smelter?

Try not to get dirt or dust in your mouth or breathe it in. It's okay if dirt gets on your skin. Follow these soil safety actions:

- Wash hands after playing or working outside and before eating
- Brush dirt off clothes before going inside
- Use a door mat to wipe dirt off your shoes
- Take off shoes before going inside
- Wash toys and pacifiers often
- Use a damp mop often
- Dust with a damp cloth
- Cover bare soil with bark or plants
- Wash fruit and vegetables
- Use gloves while working in the garden or yard



Public Health recommends children age six and under have a blood lead test:

It is hard to know if your child has been exposed to arsenic and lead because the symptoms are common. A blood lead test shows if there is lead in your child's blood. Ask your health care provider about this test and learn more at www.metrokc.gov/health/lead.

